

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JULY 12, 2011

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2011–12 REGULAR SESSION

## Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 68

**Introduced by Assembly Members Portantino, Ammiano, Galgiani,  
Gatto, and Hill**

(Principal coauthors: Senators Cannella, La Malfa, and Wyland)

June 8, 2011

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 68—Relative to the Italian American Legislator Project.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 68, as amended, Portantino. Italian American Heritage in California.

This measure would continue designation and observance of the month of October as Italian American Heritage Month. This measure would also encourage the Legislature to continue the Italian American Legislator Project and welcome the exhibit “The Italian American Legislator Project of 2011: A Legacy of Service to the California Legislature” to the State Capitol Building in October 2011 and encourage all Californians, through the K–12 curriculum and otherwise, to learn about the history, role, and contributions of Italian Americans to the State of California.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, ~~Italian Americans~~ *People of Italian descent have*  
2 *participated in American politics and government since the*  
3 *beginning of United States history, and have served in as Members*  
4 *of the California State Legislature almost since its first session*  
5 ~~held on December 15, 1849. The first wave of Italian immigrants~~

1 arrived in California before the Gold Rush (1848–52) along with  
2 other fortune seekers from all over the globe. California's first  
3 Legislature reflected this immigration as not a single member of  
4 the first Assembly was a native Californian. Nineteen Members  
5 were from northern states, ten were from southern states, five had  
6 an unknown birthplace, and two were of foreign birth; and 15,  
7 1849; and

8 WHEREAS, Through the office of Assembly Member Anthony  
9 Portantino in conjunction with the California Italian American  
10 Task Force, the California Research Bureau, and the Office of the  
11 Chief Clerk of the Assembly, "The Italian American Legislator  
12 Project of 2011: A Legacy of Service to the California Legislature"  
13 (the Legacy Project) was recently launched to find identify and  
14 compile a list of persons of Italian American heritage who have  
15 served as Members of the houses of the California Legislature  
16 Legislature. This project was initiated by the office of Assembly  
17 Member Anthony Portantino and the California Italian American  
18 Task Force with assistance from the California Research Bureau,  
19 the Office of the Chief Clerk, the Italian American Museum of Los  
20 Angeles, Lawrence DiStasi, former-Senate President pro Tempore  
21 David Roberti, other previously-serving Italian American  
22 legislators, and the staff of various currently-serving Italian  
23 American legislators; and

24 WHEREAS, The Legacy Project survey has already identified  
25 53 51 Italian Americans who are former or current members of  
26 the California Senate and Assembly. Most, but not all, of those  
27 identified had Italian surnames. This Assembly; this is the first  
28 time that a comprehensive list of Italian American legislators has  
29 been compiled and there is a need for a permanent home for the  
30 Legacy Project so that additional Members of Italian descent may  
31 be identified and added to the survey. The Legacy Project will  
32 help highlight the continuing political accomplishments and  
33 contributions of the Italian American population of California; and  
34 compiled; and

35 WHEREAS, Compiling the tentative Legacy Project list reveals  
36 a complex but highly successful journey of Italian Americans in  
37 the United States and California. A names-only search provided  
38 limited assistance for this project, making this project partly reliant  
39 on oral recollections, intergenerational confirmations, and  
40 documents not readily accessible to the public. Many names were

1 *altered deliberately or by error at Ellis Island or by government*  
 2 *and school personnel. Some names were changed during times of*  
 3 *open discrimination to gain employment, social acceptance, protect*  
 4 *children, or avoid stereotyping, and other names were simply*  
 5 *changed through marriage; and*

6 ~~WHEREAS, Legacy Project surveyors have tentatively identified~~  
 7 ~~the following former and current Italian-American legislators to~~  
 8 ~~date, and are reaching out to current and former legislators and~~  
 9 ~~community members for additional names:~~

10 *WHEREAS, The following Italian American legislators have*  
 11 *been identified by surveyors who believe that further searches are*  
 12 *needed to find other persons not listed or that further confirmation*  
 13 *is needed to positively affirm the heritage of those persons listed*  
 14 *with an asterisk:*

- 15 1. Tom Ammiano (Assembly, 2008–Present)
- 16 2. John Badaracco (Assembly, 1919, 1921, 1923)
- 17 3. Bill Bagley (Assembly, 1961–74)
- 18 4. Frank Belotti (Assembly, 1951–72)
- 19 5. Patty Berg (*Mazzarelli*) (Assembly, 2003–08)
- 20 6. Paula Boland (Assembly, 1990–96)
- 21 7. ~~Frank~~ \*Frank G. Bonelli (Assembly, 1954–58)
- 22 8. *William Bonelli (1930–32)*
- 23 8.
- 24 9. Tom Bordonaro (Assembly, 1994–98)
- 25 9. ~~Doug~~
- 26 10. \**Douglas Bosco (Assembly, 1978–82) 1978–80)*
- 27 10.
- 28 11. Marilyn Cerolini Brewer (Assembly, 1994–2000)
- 29 11. ~~Robert Bulla (Assembly, 1893, 1895; Senate, 1897, 1899)~~
- 30 12. Anthony Caminetti (Assembly, 1883, 1897, 1899; Senate,
- 31 1887, 1889, 1907–13)
- 32 13. Joseph Canciamilla (Assembly, 2000–06)
- 33 14. Victor Canepa (Assembly, 1913, 1915; Senate, 1917–21,
- 34 1927, 1929)
- 35 15. Anthony Cannella (Senate, 2010–Present)
- 36 16. Sal Cannella (Assembly, 1990–96)
- 37 17. August Cavagnaro (Assembly, 1901)
- 38 18. Eugene A. Chappie (Assembly, 1965–75)
- 39 19. Larry Chimbole (Assembly, 1976–78)
- 40 20. Dominic Cortese (Assembly, 1981–96)

- 1     ~~21. Louis Devoto (Assembly, 1899)~~
- 2     ~~22. Leonard Joseph Difani (Senate, 1933, 1935)~~
- 3     ~~23.~~
- 4     21. Vic Fazio (Assembly, 1975–78)
- 5     ~~24.~~
- 6     22. Dr. William Filante (Assembly, 1979–92)
- 7     ~~25.~~
- 8     23. Cathleen Galgiani (Assembly, 2006–Present)
- 9     ~~26.~~
- 10    24. Mike Gatto (Assembly, 2010–Present)
- 11    ~~27.~~
- 12    25. Arlen Gregorio (Senate, 1970–78)
- 13    ~~28.~~
- 14    26. Jerry Hill (Assembly, 2008–Present)
- 15    ~~29.~~
- 16    27. Wally Knox (Assembly, 1994–2000)
- 17    ~~30.~~
- 18    28. Robert Lagomarsino (Senate, 1961–74)
- 19    ~~31.~~
- 20    29. Doug LaMalfa (Assembly, 2002–08; Senate, 2010–Present)
- 21    ~~32.~~
- 22    30. Paul J. Lunardi (Assembly, 1959–63; Senate, 1963–66)
- 23    ~~33.~~
- 24    31. Ennio Martinelli (Senate, 1909, 1911)
- 25    ~~34.~~
- 26    32. Bob Moretti (Assembly, 1965–74)
- 27    ~~35.~~
- 28    33. George Moscone (Senate, 1967–76)
- 29    ~~36.~~
- 30    34. Roger Niello (Assembly, 2004–10)
- 31    ~~37.~~
- 32    35. Egisto Palmieri (Senate, 1885)
- 33    ~~38.~~
- 34    36. Joseph Pedrotti (Assembly, 1921, 1923; Senate, 1925–29,
- 35    1931)
- 36    ~~39.~~
- 37    37. Don Perata (Assembly, 1996–98; Senate, 1998–2008)
- 38    ~~40.~~
- 39    38. Anthony Pescetti (Assembly, 1999–2002)
- 40    ~~41.~~

1 39. George Plescia (Assembly, 2002–08)  
 2 ~~42.~~  
 3 40. Anthony Portantino (Assembly, 2006–Present)  
 4 ~~43.~~  
 5 41. Paul Priolo (Assembly, 1967–80)  
 6 ~~44.~~  
 7 42. David Roberti (Assembly, 1967–71; Senate, 1971–94)  
 8 ~~45.~~  
 9 43. James Rogan (Assembly, 1994–96)  
 10 ~~46.~~  
 11 44. Don Sebastiani (Assembly, 1980–86)  
 12 ~~47.~~  
 13 45. Augustus D. Splivalo (Assembly, 1867)  
 14 ~~48.~~  
 15 46. Alfred Taliaferro (Assembly, 1852; Senate, 1857, 1858)  
 16 ~~49.~~  
 17 47. Mike Thompson (Senate, 1990–98)  
 18 ~~50.~~  
 19 48. Charles P. Vicini (Assembly, 1917–19)  
 20 ~~51.~~  
 21 49. Catherine Marinelli Wright (Assembly, 1980–92; Senate,  
 22 1993–2000)  
 23 ~~52.~~  
 24 50. Mark Wyland (Assembly, ~~2000–2006~~ 2000–06; Senate,  
 25 2006–Present)  
 26 ~~53. Louis~~  
 27 51. \**Louis* Zocchi (Assembly, 1895)  
 28 WHEREAS, Italian American legislators have left ~~us with~~ a  
 29 legacy of political leadership and accomplishments. Two Italian  
 30 American legislators, David Roberti (1980–94) and Don Perata  
 31 (2004–08), have served as ~~President~~ *Presidents* pro Tempore of  
 32 the Senate, and one Italian American legislator, Bob Moretti  
 33 (1971–74), has served as Speaker of the Assembly; and  
 34 WHEREAS, Eight Italian Americans currently serve in the  
 35 California Legislature, three in the Senate and five in the Assembly;  
 36 and  
 37 WHEREAS, California’s Italian American legislators have  
 38 worked together to represent the interests of *the* Italian American  
 39 ~~people of California. During the 1990s, they authored and~~  
 40 ~~supported a resolution and exhibit highlighting “Una Storia~~

1 Segreta—The Secret Story,” a book and exhibit about the World  
2 War II internment and relocation of, and restrictions on, large  
3 numbers of California Italian Americans; authored a resolution  
4 that created the Italian American Taskforce, which is still in  
5 existence today; and *people of California, and have* authored  
6 several pieces of legislation seeking to include in the K–12  
7 curriculum the history, role, and contributions of Italian Americans.  
8 During the 2000s, they continued to pursue an Italian American  
9 curriculum through various legislative and administrative efforts.  
10 During the past four years, they have introduced resolutions  
11 designating the month of October as Italian American Heritage  
12 Month and have sponsored an annual Capitol exhibit capturing  
13 nearly 150 years of the history and contributions of Italian  
14 Americans in California; and *Americans, and resolutions*  
15 *designating October as Italian American Heritage Month, and*  
16 *have sponsored annual exhibits in the State Capitol capturing over*  
17 *180 years of Italian American history in California; and*

18 WHEREAS, Columbus Day ~~is a state holiday~~, observed on  
19 October 12 of each year ~~and, is a holiday~~ of special significance  
20 to Italian Americans. ~~Columbus Day is celebrated in Italian~~  
21 ~~American communities across California with festivals, parades,~~  
22 ~~and activities that celebrate the history and heritage of the Italian~~  
23 ~~American community. The Americans in the United States and~~  
24 ~~California, and the designation of October as Italian American~~  
25 ~~Heritage Month is a recognition of the important role and~~  
26 ~~contributions Italians significant impact Italian Americans have~~  
27 ~~made to the rich cultural fabric of California and the lives of all~~  
28 ~~its residents; and~~

29 WHEREAS, Italian Americans are a vital part of California’s  
30 diversity, their rich heritage and traditions are a part of the lives  
31 of all Californians. ~~WHEREAS, The 2000 Census counted~~  
32 ~~1,450,885 Italian Americans in California, an ethnic group that~~  
33 ~~constituted constituting 4.3 percent of the state’s population; and~~  
34 ~~the third largest Italian American population in the United States;~~  
35 ~~and~~

36 WHEREAS, Italian Americans have made enormous  
37 contributions to the economic and cultural development and success  
38 of California, and Italian American legislators have made important  
39 contributions to the political life of California through their

dedication to public service and by presenting the interests of the Italian American community of California; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring,* That the month of October continue to be designated Italian American Heritage Month; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Legislature maintain *and continue to update* the Legacy Project and continue annual observances of Italian American Heritage Month; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Legislature welcomes the exhibit “The Italian American Legislator Project of 2011: A Legacy of Service to the California Legislature” to the State Capitol Building during the month of October; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Legislature encourages all Californians, through the K–12 curriculum and otherwise, to learn about the history, role, and contributions of Italian Americans to the State of California.